

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 1547

NAPLES FOR CINCSOUTH POLAD

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, MASS, TU

SUBJECT: PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON TURKISH ABILITY TO WEATHER U.S.

AID CUT-OFF

1. SUMMARY: LARGE NUMBER OF MILITARY AND CIVIL OFFICIALS HAVE DURING PAST FEW DAYS ISSUED STATEMENTS GIVING OPTIMISTIC PICTURE OF TURKEY'S ABILITIES TO COPE WITH U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND SALES CUT-OFF. THESE COMMENTS, WHICH HAVE RECEIVED WIDE PRESS COVERAGE, SEEM PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO REASSURE PUBLIC THAT TURKISH ARMED FORCES ARE NOT RPT NOT OVERLY RELIANT ON U.S. THEY ALSO REFLECT, HOWEVER, A GROWING COMMITMENT TO GIVE DEFENSE SECTOR A LARGER SHARE OF THE NATION'S RESOURCES. END SUMMARY.

2. DEFENSE MINISTER ILHAN SANCAR ANNOUNCED TO PRESS THAT SUSPENSION OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE WILL NECESSITATE AN INCREASE IN PLANNED TL20,000 MILLION DEFENSE BUDGET BY AS MUCH AS TL9,000 MILLION. HE INDICATED THAT PRIME MINISTER HAS APPROVED INCREASE IN PRINCIPLE, THAT
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SUPPLEMENTARY DEFENSE APPROPRIATION WILL BE SOUGHT AFTER

REGULAR BUDGET BILL IS PASSED, AND THAT TURKEY WILL DEFINITELY OBTAIN WHAT IT NEEDS EITHER BY PURCHASING OR MANUFACTURING ITS NEEDS.

3. PRESS HAS MOST RECENTLY FOCUSED ON STATEMENTS MADE IN CONNECTION WITH SERIES OF HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS BETWEEN CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICIALS ON MEANS OF EXPANDING ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY. THESE MEETINGS REPORTEDLY DECIDED THAT GOVERNMENT CREDITS AND INCENTIVES WILL BE PROVIDED PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENTS IN DEFENSE AND RELATED HEAVY INDUSTRY. DOMESTIC CAPABILITY OF FILLING FIFTY PERCENT TO SEVENTY PERCENT OF GAP CREATED BY U.S. AID CUT-OFF WAS CITED AS GOAL.

4. ALSO DRAWING CONSIDERABLE PRESS ATTENTION WAS AIR FORCE GENERAL'S SOMEWHAT OVERSTATED DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS MADE IN PROVIDING SPARES FOR JET FLEET AND GENERAL STAFF'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THREE SERVICES' FOUNDATIONS FOR ARMAMENTS MANUFACTURING AND PURCHASES HAD REACHED TL80 MILLION FOR GROUND FORCES, TL248 MILLION FOR NAVY, AND TL1,300 MILLION FOR AIR FORCE. AIR FORCE SPOKESMAN IS QUOTED AS SAYING, QUOTE LET THE AMERICANS APPLY AN ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST US; THERE IS NOTHING WE TURKS CANNOT DO. UNQUOTE.

5. ANKA NEWS AGENCY REPORTS THAT THE U.S. ARMS EMBARGO HAS HEIGHTENED GOT EFFORTS TO PROCURE ARMS FROM OTHER SOURCES. ACCORDING TO ANKA, THE BRITISH JAGUAR AND HAWK, THE FRENCH MIRAGE, AND GERMAN-FRENCH ALFA AND THE SWEDISH VIJEN ARE ALL PROSPECTIVE TURKISH AIR FORCE PURCHASES.

6. COMMENT: THESE STATEMENTS ATTEST TO A CONCERTED EFFORT ON PART OF MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO REASSURE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT GOT HAS INTENTION AND CAPABILITY TO LOWER SIGNIFICANTLY ITS DEPENDENCE ON U.S. SALES AND ASSISTANCE. WHILE SOME OF THIS CLEARLY CONSTITUTES WHISTLING IN DARK, THE PUBLIC IS ALSO BEING PREPARED TO AN INCREASED SHIFT OF RESOURCES TO THE DEFENSE SECTOR, A COURSE OF ACTION WHICH HAS AS YET CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT RPT NOT BEEN PUBLICLY CHALLENGED.
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